

U.S. Attorney's Office
Northern District of Ohio
Response to Methamphetamine Epidemic

As part of the emerging national effort, federal and local law enforcement are fully engaged in combating the manufacturing and distribution of methamphetamine in the Northern District of Ohio.

The first significant methamphetamine indictment returned in this District was the recent March 16, 2005, indictment of 55 individuals for conspiring to distribute methamphetamine, and related counts, in northeast Ohio. The case is currently pending in federal District Court. The indictment was the result of more than two years of investigation conducted by DEA and the Akron/Summit County HIDTA Initiative, a HIDTA sponsored local drug task force. Using court authorized Title III wiretaps over the course of nine months, and nine separate telephone lines, investigators recorded more than 15,000 telephone conversations. The Ohio defendants obtained their methamphetamine from Scottsdale and Phoenix, Arizona, and Atlanta, Georgia. Using individual drug couriers and common carriers such as the United States Postal Service, FedEx, and Greyhound bus, the organization moved methamphetamine from Arizona and Georgia to Ohio. Several couriers and packages were intercepted due to information learned from the wiretaps. In total, law enforcement officers estimate that this organization was responsible for distributing more than 150 pounds of methamphetamine over the past eighteen months alone.

Additionally, DEA and the U.S. Attorney's Office, at the request of Thomas Sartini, Ashtabula County Prosecutor, agreed to assist Ashtabula County law enforcement with the prosecution of several "mom and pop" methamphetamine labs, cooks, and distributors. Subsequently, seven individuals were federally indicted, with five defendants receiving sentences ranging from 24 months to 108 months. Cases are currently pending against the remaining two defendants. However, most meth lab/distribution cases are still being prosecuted at the state level. It remains, nevertheless, the commitment of the United States Attorney, working in partnership with federal and local law enforcement, to aggressively pursue organized interstate methamphetamine networks (manufacturers and distributors) operating in the Northern District of Ohio.